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9

DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam

~~Top Secret~~

126

[redacted] 3.5(c)

29 January 1968

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Information as of 1600
29 January 1968

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HIGHLIGHTS

Military activity in South Vietnam has slackened since the beginning of the modified allied cease-fire period. Hanoi has indicated a willingness to discuss a new proposal for negotiations with UN Secretary General Thant.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam: Over-all fighting has abated since the beginning of the modified allied cease-fire period on 29 January (Paras. 1-2). A number of reports shed additional light on the activities of enemy units in western Quang Tri Province (Paras. 3-7). During 1967 nearly 1,400 Communist-initiated incidents were directed at Revolutionary Development cadre (Paras. 8-9).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam: Reaction in Saigon to President Thieu's "state of the nation" address has been mixed (Para. 1).

[redacted]

3.3(h)(2)

IV. Other Communist Military Developments: There is nothing of significance to report.

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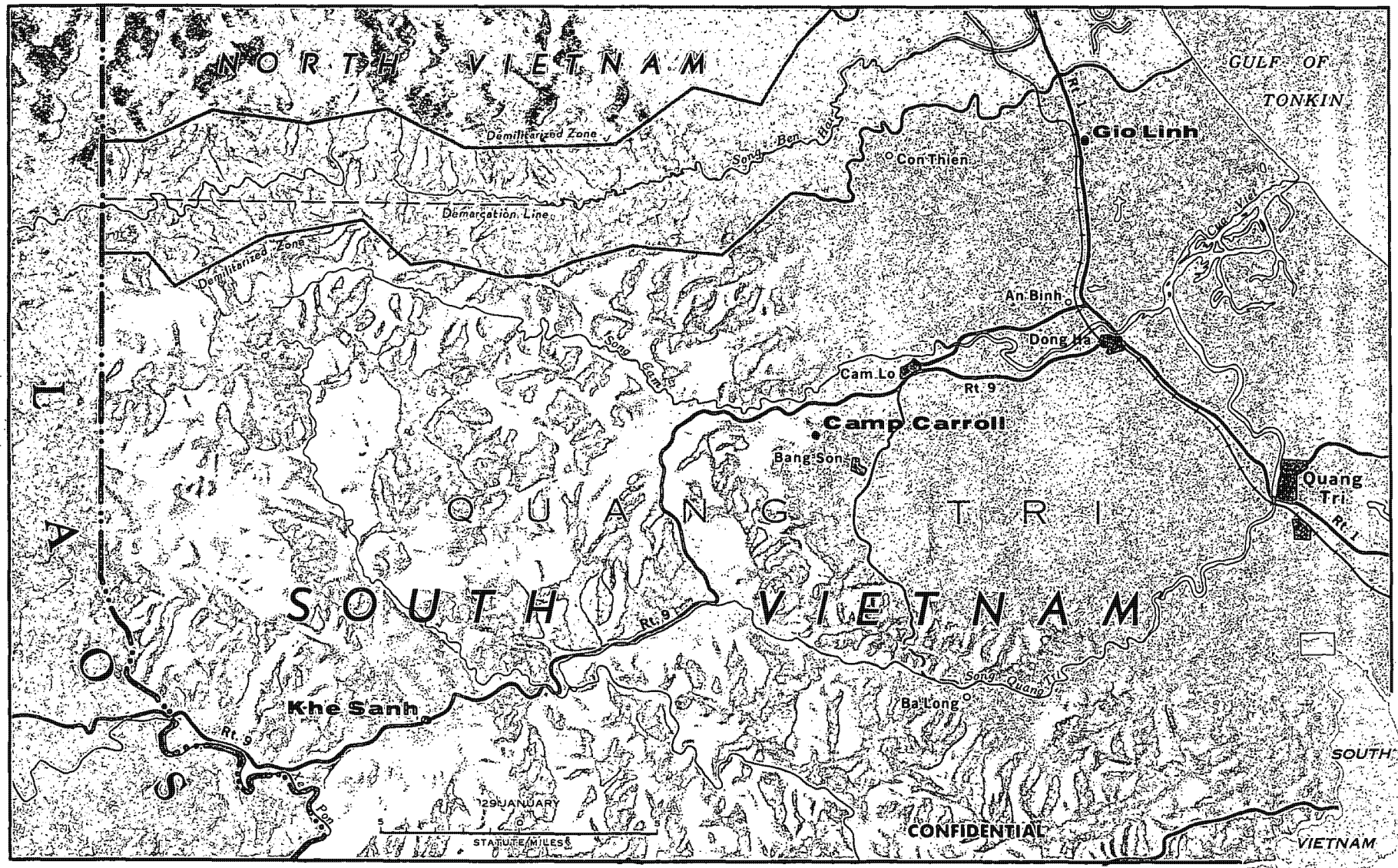

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. The pace of military activity slackened on 29 January with the beginning of the modified allied cease-fire period. There have been no significant Communist-initiated actions reported thus far since the 36-hour allied cease-fire began in II, III, and IV Corps.

2. In I Corps on 28 January, US Marines fought a day-long battle with a North Vietnamese force near the allied strongpoint of Gio Linh in northeastern Quang Tri Province. This was the second battle in two days in this same general area. In both battles the enemy was supported by heavy mortar and 130-mm. artillery fire. The artillery possibly came from positions within the Demilitarized Zone. The enemy unit, tentatively identified as a battalion of the Communists' 803rd Regiment, a subordinate of the North Vietnamese 324B Division, had 52 killed and 52 weapons captured; American casualties were seven killed and 27 wounded.

The Khe Sanh - Demilitarized Zone Area

3.3(h)(2)

3. A number of reports from prisoners shed light on enemy units, movements, and weapons in the Khe Sanh - Demilitarized Zone area.

4. Most significant is the identification of one, and possibly two, regiments of the North Vietnamese 320th Division just north of Camp Carroll in north-central Quang Tri Province. A North Vietnamese who was taken prisoner less than two miles north of Camp Carroll claimed that he was a member of the 320th Division's 64th Regiment. 3.3(h)(2)

3.3(h)(2)

5. Camp Carroll was hit by heavy mortar and rocket fire last week and US Marines fought two sharp battles just north of the base which resulted in 27 US and some 150 enemy killed.

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7. Another indication of the possible introduction of heavier antiaircraft weapons in the Khe Sanh area was reported on 28 January. The pilot of a US Air Force F-105 reported receiving light, inaccurate 37-mm. or 57-mm. fire from the hills north and west of the base. [redacted] 3.3(h)(2) [redacted] sighting four 37-mm. antiaircraft guns 12 miles northwest of Khe Sanh. Prior to these reports, the heaviest weapons which the Communists used against aircraft in South Vietnam were 12.7-mm. machine guns. The introduction of 37-mm. or 57-mm. guns would increase the enemy's ability to disrupt aerial resupply and reinforcements in the Khe Sanh area.

Communist Actions Against Revolutionary Development Workers

8. There were 136 enemy incidents directed against Revolutionary Development cadres during December: 30 in I Corps, 41 in II Corps, 27 in III Corps, and 38 in IV Corps. Resulting losses during the month were 70 killed, 139 wounded, and seven missing compared with losses to the enemy of 65 killed and another 11 captured.

9. During the past year, the enemy initiated 1,343 incidents directed against Revolutionary Development cadre. Losses from enemy action during the year totaled 720 killed, 1,312 wounded, and 122 missing. The cadres, assisted by South Vietnamese and allied security forces, were responsible for enemy losses of 1,374 killed and 209 captured.

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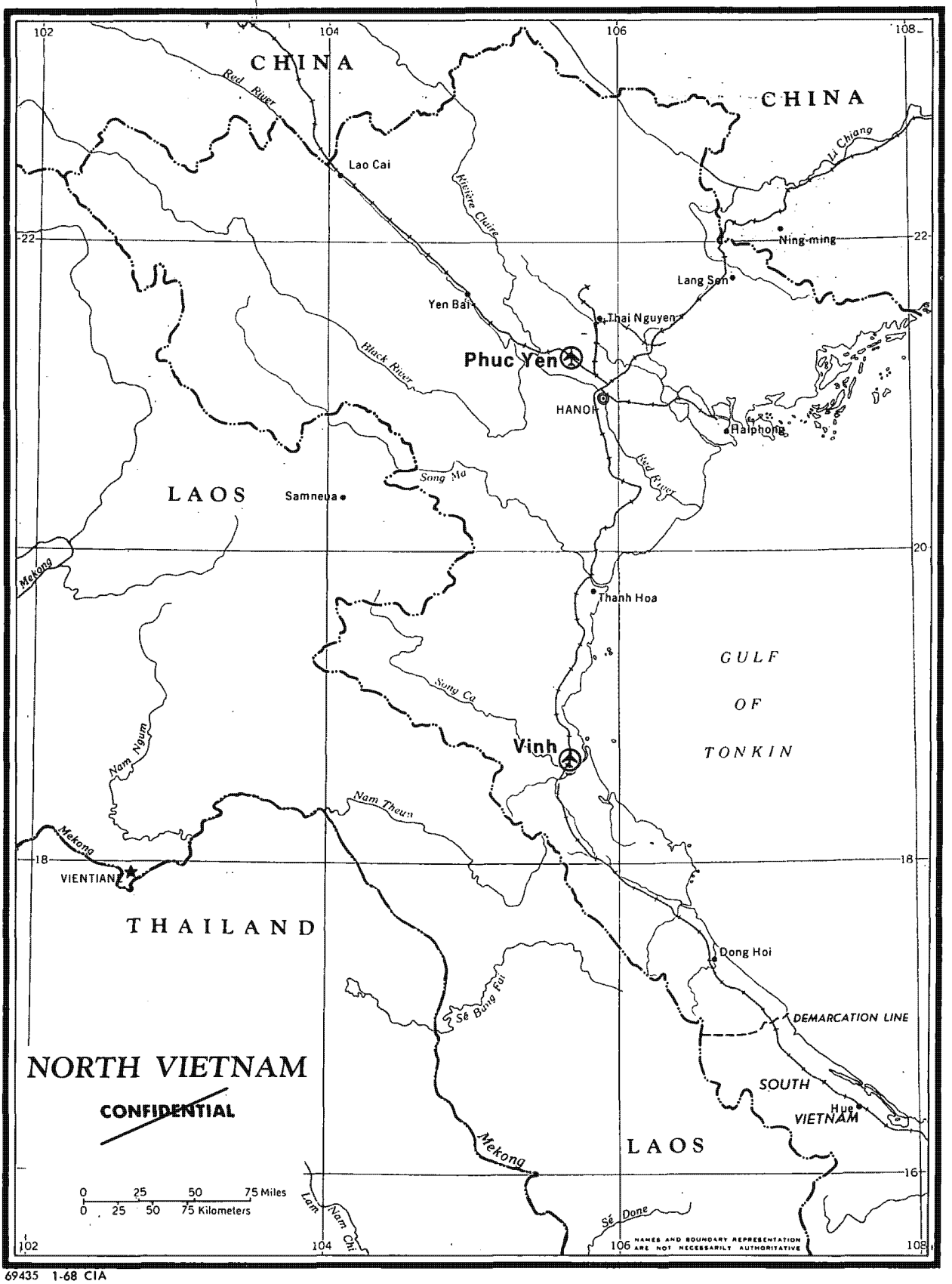

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III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

1. The apparent effort to operate MIGs in southern North Vietnam continued on 28 January when two MIG-21 interceptors flew into the Vinh area in the early afternoon. The aircraft took off from Phuc Yen and were flown by the same North Vietnamese airmen who have flown into the Vinh area three times before. As in previous flights, the MIGs showed no willingness to engage in aerial combat. When US aircraft appeared in the Vinh area, the fighters were ordered to turn north and return to base.

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3. The Vinh Airfield was again bombed by US aircraft on 29 January. Pilots reported blasting craters in the runway in at least three places and seeding the facility with delayed action bombs. It is not yet known if US air strikes have rendered the Vinh Airfield unusable to MIGs.

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IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

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